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Daily Highlights

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TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

* Secretary-General temporarily appoints Kofi Annan as Special Envoy to former Yugoslavia and NATO; Ismat Kittani to serve as Under-Secretary-General for Peace-keeping.

* UNPROFOR officials meet with Bosnian Government and Bosnian Serb representatives in Sarajevo with view to securing implementation of cease-fire agreement.

* United Kingdom says it will convene Peace Implementation Conference for former Yugoslavia in London within weeks.

* Secretary-General says Rwanda still has long road to travel in search for reconciliation and recovery.

* Failure to uphold international law in one situation sets precedent for similar failure elsewhere, President of Cyprus tells General Assembly.

* Saint Vincent and the Grenadines stresses need for full implementation of Programme of Action for Small Island Developing States.

* Haiti tells General Assembly it is irreversibly committed to democracy, but political progress requires sustainable development.

* Liberia says its people will emerge from years of war stronger and more united, with national identity taking precedence over tribal ties.

* Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs holds new round of talks with Foreign Minister of Myanmar at Headquarters.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has decided to temporarily appoint Under-Secretary-General Kofi Annan as his Special Envoy to the former

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Yugoslavia and also to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). In a letter to the President of the Security Council, he said he had acceded to Special Representative Yasushi Akashi's request for reassignment in view of the progress being made regarding the diplomatic and military situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina and elsewhere in the former Yugoslavia.

The Secretary-General said he had taken that decision after careful consideration, and taking into account the critical period ahead for United Nations operations in the area. In conjunction with the temporary appointment of Mr. Annan, which will become effective on 1 November, Senior Adviser Ismat Kittani will serve as Under-Secretary-General for Peace-keeping Operations. Mr. Akashi will assume the post of Senior Adviser to the Secretary-General.

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The cease-fire recently agreed to by the Bosnian parties did not take effect today because utility supplies had not been fully restored to Sarajevo as required. However, a United Nations spokesman expressed hope that the fighting would soon cease, as electricity supplies had been at least partially restored and the gas main had been reopened. United Nations officials were scheduled to meet with representatives of the Bosnian Government and the Bosnian Serbs at Sarajevo airport to assess the situation.

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Mr. Boutros-Ghali today welcomed the decision by the Government of the United Kingdom to convene a Peace Implementation Conference in London in the coming weeks. He said the Conference would make a valuable contribution to international efforts, including those of the United Nations, to restore peace and stability to the former Yugoslavia.

The Conference will focus on practical issues related to the implementation of a peace agreement, and form part of the process involving proximity talks and a peace conference.

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While Rwanda has made progress in overcoming the carnage and chaos of 1994, it still has a long road to travel in its search for reconciliation and recovery, according to the Secretary-General. In a report dated 7 October, he said the damage done to Rwanda's society and psyche by last year's events had been brutal and profound. Recent crises created by the expulsion of Rwandan refugees from Zaire and the killings of refugees near Gisenyi underlined the fragility of the recovery process.

Sustainable recovery was possible only in conditions of genuine peace and stability, the Secretary-General stressed. It was essential that those responsible for atrocities be brought to justice so as to put an end to the prevailing culture of impunity. He hoped that the International Tribunal

would soon commence its proceedings and that substantial progress would be made in the installation of an effective national judiciary. At the same time, the underlying political causes of the refugee problem must be addressed in a process of genuine national reconciliation.

The Secretary-General noted that the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) would expire on 8 December. It was now time for the Government of Rwanda and the international community to seriously consider the future role of the United Nations in the country. Meanwhile, in view of the Organization's financial crisis, the Special Representative for Rwanda was studying, in conjunction with the Government, the possibility of a very substantial reduction in the Mission's troop strength.

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The President of the Republic of Cyprus, Glafcos Clerides, told the General Assembly today that reducing forces and armaments could not alone guarantee international security. However, it could reduce the risk of conflict and contribute to confidence-building and conflict resolution. He reminded the Assembly of his proposal for the complete demilitarization of the Republic of Cyprus; the withdrawal of the Turkish occupation forces; the disbanding of the National Guard; and the handing over of all arms to the custody of the United Nations. That proposal not only reflected good intentions but also the spirit of the times. Unfortunately, it had been rejected by Turkey.

Instead of complying with repeated Security Council and Assembly resolutions, the Turkish occupation forces were increasing their strength, the President continued. That not only posed a serious threat to regional security, but also a challenge to the authority of the United Nations. He also expressed concern about the massive violation of the human rights of persons evicted from their homes by the Turkish forces. "We must remember that failure to uphold international law and respect for human rights in one situation sets a precedent for similar failure elsewhere, with often catastrophic consequences," he concluded.

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The Minister of Foreign Affairs and Tourism of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Alpian Allen, told the Assembly that several islands in the Caribbean region had been severely ravaged by storms and hurricanes less than one month ago. He expressed grave concern about the vulnerability of such States, and stressed the need for full implementation of the Programme of Action agreed to at the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. In the spirit of Caribbean brotherhood, the entire region had come to the support of those affected. However, further external assistance was crucial.

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The Minister also expressed concern about the future of the Caribbean banana industry. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and other banana producing countries of the Windward Islands accounted for only 3 per cent of world trade in the commodity. However, powerful multinational companies which controlled over 80 per cent of the market were seeking to reverse the special arrangements under the Lome Agreement. The multinational companies must not pursue profits at the expense of small island States struggling to maintain democracy. He warned that destruction of the Caribbean banana industry would create economic and social havoc would have severe repercussions at the international level.

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Yesterday, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Haiti, Claudette Werleigh, thanked the international community for assisting in achieving peace and political stability in her country. With the support of the United Nations Mission in Haiti (UNMIH), the Haitian Government had guaranteed freedom of association and expression and was holding municipal and legislative elections. It had also established the National Commission on Truth and Justice to investigate crimes committed during the coup.

Haiti was irreversibly committed to democracy, the Foreign Minister told the General Assembly. However, there could be no viable democracy without sustainable development. In that regard, the Haitian Government attached great importance to education and believed that improved sharing of national wealth would lead to stability. She expressed concern about the situation of refugees and opposed their forced repatriation. She went on to say that the profitable trade in conventional arms was responsible for conflicts around the world.

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Liberia's Foreign Minister, Momolu Sackor Sirleaf, told the Assembly that the peace process in his country was irreversible. He said the Abuja Agreement was expected to usher in a new dawn for Liberia. Unlike previous agreements, it provided for a six-man collective Presidency comprising leaders of the principal warring parties and three civilian representatives. "The very fact that the present collective Presidency is functioning and deliberating with unanimity of purpose is reason to celebrate," he added.

The Foreign Minister welcomed the decision to convene a pledging conference at Headquarters on 27 October for the demobilization and reconstruction of Liberia, as well as for assistance to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Liberia was in urgent need of substantial assistance from the international community, particularly for the rehabilitation of children traumatized by war, the reintegration of former combatants into society, and the revival of the private sector. He believed that Liberians would emerge from years of war a stronger and more united

people, with national identity taking precedence over tribal or ethnic identity.

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A new round of talks is currently under way at Headquarters between the Foreign Minister of Myanmar, U Ohn Gyaw, and the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Alvaro de Soto, who is representing the Secretary-General. The talks are being held in the context of the mandate entrusted to the Secretary-General by the General Assembly in the implementation of resolutions on Myanmar. Previous rounds of talks were held in Yangon in February and August.

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